

Application/Control Number: 09/815,450

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claims pto

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for invoking delivery of a digital product from a computer of ~~an Internet~~ a vendor to a computer of a customer, while maintaining customer anonymity with respect to the vendor, comprising, with the computer system of a merchant:

transacting a sale of the digital product to the customer;

in response to the sale, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery;

receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt; and

in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer, wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order is not marked as fulfilled;

wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing payment or transaction information, pertaining to the sale of the digital product, to the vendor.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing the address of the customer to the vendor.

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4. The method of claim 1, wherein no information about the customer is exposed to the vendor.

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5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving from the vendor an acknowledgment of product delivery to the customer.

6. The method of claim 1, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase comprises:

creating a receipt identification;

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encrypting the receipt identification;
encoding the encrypted receipt identification;
placing the encoded, encrypted receipt identification within a message;
and
5 sending the message to the customer..

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the message is sent to the customer via email.

10 8. The method of claim 6, wherein placing the encoded, encrypted receipt identification within a message comprises:
incorporating the encoded encrypted receipt identification in a Uniform Resource Locator (URL);
placing the Uniform Resource Locator within a text message.

15 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the message is sent to the customer via email..

10 10. The method of claim 8, wherein receiving a request for product delivery from the customer comprises:
receiving an HTTP request directed at the Uniform Resource Locator;
and
authenticating the request for product delivery.

25 11. The method of claim 10, wherein authenticating the request for product delivery comprises:
parsing the Uniform Resource Locator for the encoded encrypted receipt identification;
decoding the encoded encrypted receipt identification; and
30 decrypting the encrypted receipt identification.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request is created by redirecting the request for product delivery to the vendor.

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13. The method of claim 1, further comprising authenticating the fulfillment request.

5 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of an identifier of the purchased product.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein authenticating the fulfillment request utilizes a de-hashing function of the secure hash.

10 16. The method of claim 1, wherein securely transmitting to the vendor a fulfillment request comprises sending one or more HTTP messages to the vendor.

15 17. The method of claim 16, wherein the one or more HTTP messages simulate a connection from an interactive customer.

18. A method of delivering a digital product from a computer of an on-line vendor to a computer of a customer at the request of a computer of on-line merchant comprising;

20 receiving an order fulfillment request resulting from a transaction between the customer and the on-line merchant;
verifying the validity of the fulfillment request; and
delivering the product to the computer of the customer;
wherein the identity of the customer is not exposed to the vendor.

25 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the method is performed without exposing payment or transaction information, pertaining to the sale of the digital product, to the vendor.

30 20. The method of claim 18, wherein the method is performed without exposing the address of the customer to the vendor.

21. The method of claim 18, wherein delivering the product to the computer of the customer comprises:

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transmitting the digital product directly from the computer of the on-line vendor to the computer of the customer.

22. The method of claim 18, wherein delivering the product to the computer of the customer comprises:

transmitting the product to the computer of the on-line merchant,
forwarding the transmission of the digital product from the computer of the on-line merchant to the computer of the customer.

23. The method of claim 18 wherein receiving an order fulfillment request comprises receiving one or more HTTP requests mimicking the behavior of a customer.

24. A digital product delivery system, wherein the digital product is purchased by a customer from an on-line merchant and delivered to a computer of the customer from a computer of an on-line vendor, comprising:

a rights manager, operated by the merchant, the rights manager receiving a request for the delivery of a digital product from the computer of the customer; and

an order processor operated by the vendor connected to the rights manager via a communications network;

wherein, the transfer of the product from the order processor to the customer's computer occurs at the direction of the rights manager and without the disclosure of the identity of the customer to the vendor.

25. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein payment and transaction information pertaining to the purchase of the digital product is not disclosed to the vendor.

26. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein the address of the customer is not disclosed to the vendor.

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27. The digital product delivery system of claim 24, wherein the communications network is the Internet.

28. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein transmitting a receipt to the customer comprises transmitting a uniform resource locator (URL) to the computer of the customer, said URL comprising an encoded portion that identifies an associated order.

29. (previously presented) The method of Claim 28, wherein the URL is transmitted to the computer of the customer by electronic mail.

30. (previously presented) The method of Claim 28, further comprising receiving a request for said URL from the computer of the customer, and responding to the request by generating and returning a web page that comprises a link for initiating delivery of the digital product.

31. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request specifies an identifier of the digital product and a network address of the computer of the customer.

32. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of at least an identifier of the digital product and an identifier of an associated order.

33. (new) The method of Claim 1, wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order is not marked as fulfilled.

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34. (currently amended) ~~The method of Claim 1,~~ A method for invoking delivery of a digital product from a computer of a vendor to a computer of a customer, while maintaining customer anonymity with respect to the vendor, comprising, with the computer system of a merchant:

transacting a sale of the digital product to the customer;

in response to the sale, transmitting to the customer a receipt for the purchase, said receipt containing a reference by which the customer may initiate a request for product delivery;

receiving a request for product delivery from the computer of the customer produced from the receipt; and

in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer, wherein the computer system of

the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to the request for product delivery, securely transmitting to the computer of the vendor a fulfillment request containing sufficient information for the vendor to deliver the digital product to the customer, wherein the computer system of the merchant transmits the fulfillment request to the computer of the vendor in response to determining that a corresponding order has not been fulfilled more than a threshold number of times;

wherein the method is performed without exposing the identity of the customer to the vendor.

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35. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising receiving from the computer of the vendor a delivery acknowledgement, and responding to the delivery acknowledgement by marking an order by the customer for the digital product as fulfilled.

36. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising inhibiting downloads of the digital product to the customer once the digital product has been downloaded a threshold number of times.

37. (previously presented) The method of Claim 36, wherein the threshold is greater than one.

38. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is performed without exposing any information about the customer to the vendor.

39. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the method is performed without requiring any client software on the computer of the customer other than a web browser.

40. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the digital product is an electronic book.

41. (new) A merchant computer system that performs the method of Claim 1.

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42. (previously presented) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 1.

43. (currently amended) A method performed by a merchant computer system, the method comprising:

receiving, at the merchant computer system, an order placed by a user for a digital product, said order identifying a user and payment information of the user;
storing a record of the order in a database of the merchant computer system;

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subsequent to placement of the order, generating a fulfillment request message for transmission to a vendor computer system of a vendor that is responsible for delivery of the digital product to users, wherein the fulfillment request message includes information identifying the order and the digital product;

sending the fulfillment request message, or causing the fulfillment request message to be sent, to the vendor computer system to initiate electronic delivery of the digital product to the user;

receiving from the vendor computer system a confirmation that the digital product has been delivered to the user; and

in response to receiving the confirmation, updating the record of the order, as stored in the database of the merchant computer system, to indicate that the digital product has been delivered to the user; and

receiving, at the merchant computer system, a delivery request that corresponds to the order, and in response to the delivery request, determining whether the digital product has already been delivered to the user;

wherein the method is performed by the merchant computer system without exposing to the vendor computer system either the payment information of the user or an identifier of the user.

44. (previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein the fulfillment request message specifies an IP address of a user computer to which the digital product is to be delivered.

45. (previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein the method further comprises the merchant computer system inhibiting additional deliveries of the digital product to the user once the digital product has been delivered to the user a threshold number of times.

46. (previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein the merchant computer system is further responsive to placement of the order by sending to a computer of the user an electronic receipt that includes a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that may be accessed by

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the user to initiate a download of the digital product, said URL including an encoded portion that identifies the order.

47. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein the URL points to the merchant computer system, which uses the encoded portion of the URL to generate the fulfillment request.

48. (previously presented) The method of Claim 46, wherein the URL points to the vendor computer system, such that the user may initiate transmission of the fulfillment request to the vendor computer system by accessing the URL.

49. (new) The method of Claim 43, further comprising receiving, at the merchant computer system, a delivery request that corresponds to the order, and in response to the delivery request, determining whether the digital product has already been delivered to the user.

50. (currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[49]]~~ 43, wherein the delivery request is generated by a user computer in response to user selection of a link transmitted thereto by the merchant computer system, said link pointing to a URL that includes encoded information about the order.

51. (currently amended) The method of Claim ~~[[49]]~~ 43, wherein the delivery request is received by the merchant computer system from the vendor computer system.

52. (previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein the method enables the digital work to be securely delivered to a computer of the user over a network without requiring any client software on the computer of the user other than a web browser.

53. (previously presented) The method of Claim 43, wherein the digital work is an electronic book.

54. (new) A merchant computer system that performs the method of Claim 43.

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55. (previously presented) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 43.

56. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein transmitting a receipt to the customer comprises transmitting a uniform resource locator (URL) to the computer of the customer, said URL comprising an encoded portion that identifies an associated order.

57. (new) The method of Claim 56, wherein the URL is transmitted to the computer of the customer by electronic mail.

58. (new) The method of Claim 56, further comprising receiving a request for said URL from the computer of the customer, and responding to the request by generating and returning a web page that comprises a link for initiating delivery of the digital product.

59. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the fulfillment request specifies an identifier of the digital product and a network address of the computer of the customer.

60. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the fulfillment request contains a secure hash, the secure hash being a function of at least an identifier of the digital product and an identifier of an associated order.

61. (new) The method of Claim 34, further comprising receiving from the computer of the vendor a delivery acknowledgement, and responding to the delivery acknowledgement by marking an order by the customer for the digital product as fulfilled.

62. (new) The method of Claim 34, further comprising inhibiting downloads of the digital product to the customer once the digital product has been downloaded a threshold number of times.

63. (new) The method of Claim 62, wherein the threshold is greater than one.

64. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the method is performed without exposing any information about the customer to the vendor.

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65. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the method is performed without requiring any client software on the computer of the customer other than a web browser.

66. (new) The method of Claim 34, wherein the digital product is an electronic book.

67. (new) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a computer program that, when executed by a merchant computer system, performs the method of Claim 34.

68. (new) A merchant computer system comprising a processor and a memory, said memory comprising instructions that, when executed by the merchant computer system, cause the merchant computer system to perform a method comprising:

receiving, at the merchant computer system, an order placed by a user for a digital product, said order identifying a user and payment information of the user;

storing a record of the order in a database of the merchant computer system;

subsequent to placement of the order, generating a fulfillment request message for transmission to a vendor computer system of a vendor that is responsible for delivery of the digital product to users, wherein the fulfillment request message includes information identifying the order and the digital product;

sending the fulfillment request message, or causing the fulfillment request message to be sent, to the vendor computer system to initiate electronic delivery of the digital product to the user;

receiving from the vendor computer system a confirmation that the digital product has been delivered to the user;

in response to receiving the confirmation, updating the record of the order, as stored in the database of the merchant computer system, to indicate that the digital product has been delivered to the user; and

receiving, at the merchant computer system, a delivery request that corresponds to the order, and in response to the delivery request, determining whether the digital product has already been delivered to the user;

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wherein the method is performed by the merchant computer system without exposing to the vendor computer system either the payment information of the user or an identifier of the user.